

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General
6 September 2017

Original: English

2017 session

28 July 2016-27 July 2017

High-level segment**Summary record of the 44th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 July 2017, at 3 p.m.

President: Ms. Chatardová (Vice-President) (Czechia)

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Ms. Chatardová (Czechia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (continued)

(E/2017/33, E/2017/50, E/2017/64, E/2017/66, E/2017/69 and E/2017/72)

Introductory statements

1. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges (E/2017/64) and the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Beyond gross domestic product: multidimensional poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals" (E/2017/69), said that the two reports should be read in conjunction as they addressed different but related aspects of eradicating poverty.

2. The first report focused on the challenges faced in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 1, the eradication of poverty, its interlinkage with other Goals, key policy actions for eradicating poverty, systemic difficulties created by the shifting global environment and opportunities for international cooperation. It referred to numerous positive experiences and tools which could be shared among Member States. Access to disaggregated data was particularly important, since it facilitated the development of evidence-based policies that could be monitored. The report also highlighted that, given the inequitable burden of poverty among women, youth and other groups, policies to promote integration and coherence were necessary, especially at the national level, including social protection measures and initiatives to ensure that trade, investment and economic integration were more effective and inclusive. Transformative action depended on coordinated efforts from all levels of public institutions and the removal of barriers between Government and private sector partners. In the report, the Secretary-General urged the international community to promote inclusive partnerships and develop capacity-building, and encouraged the Council to provide the United Nations development system with leadership and guidance on poverty eradication.

3. The second report highlighted the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty eradication in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. It identified that approach as a central objective in many countries and provided an overview of national

approaches and tools for tackling poverty. It highlighted the commonalities and distinctions between various national and regional approaches and briefly examined holistic strategies and approaches to growth and general well-being. An increasing number of countries were integrating multidimensional poverty reduction strategies into their national development plans and priorities. The broad diversity of national approaches therefore created ample opportunities for knowledge and information exchange. Some commonalities existed in approaches, especially in identifying health, education and living standards as key aspects of national strategies. There were many opportunities to build on those commonalities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that respect, the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals could provide a valuable contribution to measuring and reducing multidimensional poverty.

4. Introducing the World Economic and Social Survey 2017 (E/2017/50), he said that the survey was commemorating its seventieth anniversary. The latest survey reviewed the 70 years of findings and drew lessons from the implementation of sustainable development policies over the years. Since the Sustainable Development Goals required a dynamic and thriving global economy, Member States could learn from past experience to deepen international coordination, which could in turn boost economic growth. The global economic situation in 2017, compounded by weak global growth, would probably hamper implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The survey had consistently highlighted the role of global policy coordination in supporting economic integration and stable monetary and trade systems. Countries needed adequate policy space and international support for the structural transformation necessary for carrying out the 2030 Agenda. A focus on institutions was also essential at the national level.

5. **Mr. Ocampo** (Chair of the Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its nineteenth session (E/2017/33), said that the Committee had focused on lessons learned from developing productive capacities from countries graduated and graduating from the least developed country category. The theme of eradicating poverty in all its dimensions was important for three reasons. First, by increasing productive capacities, countries could precipitate structural transformation and create decent jobs on a large scale, thereby reducing poverty. Second, least developed countries faced the most widespread and

persistent cases of poverty and the most severe structural impediments to building productive capacities. They therefore deserved special attention. Third, there was a lot to gain from the exchange of experiences between countries which had graduated or were graduating from the least developed country category. Those lessons learned could boost the development progress of least developed countries.

6. Integrated policies to build productive capacities were required in five areas: measures to improve development governance; policies to create synergies between increased productive capacities and social outcomes; macroeconomic and financial policies to support the expansion of productive capacity and increase resilience to external shocks; industrial and sectoral policies; and international support measures in the areas of trade, official development assistance (ODA) and international tax cooperation. The Committee found that, although there was no one-size-fits-all solution, the five policy areas were relevant to all least developed countries. Peace and security, strong national ownership of the development agenda and the establishment of development-oriented institutions were also key factors in every case. It identified three pathways to an upgraded status.

7. The first pathway was that of States experiencing rapid income growth from natural resource exploitation. On account of insufficient investment in human assets and a lack of economic diversification, countries on that pathway did not move any closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and often large parts of their population were left in poverty. Governments had the public resources available and claimed to prioritize social sectors and economic diversification, but low transparency and weak development governance prevented them from channelling natural resource revenues into those sectors.

8. The second pathway combined income growth with investment in human assets. Countries on that pathway were typically small economies with limited scope for economic diversification. They were often vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, overly specialized in sectors such as tourism or natural resources and plagued by inequalities. Nevertheless, good development governance in those countries facilitated the development of human assets, prudent macroeconomic policies and a pragmatic and strategic application of industrial and sectoral policies. Governments tended to emphasize social policy from the beginning of the development trajectory, adopting policies to ensure food security, create opportunities for education and facilitate access to health care.

International cooperation was crucial to many countries on the second pathway, especially if donor support was well coordinated. ODA was mainstreamed into national development planning and sector-wide approaches to programming had been adopted. Some countries on the second pathway benefited from far-sighted policies regarding their diaspora and remittances.

9. A third pathway, typically associated with larger economies, was characterized by investments in human assets and structural transformation towards high-productivity manufacturing and services, contributing to steady, albeit slow, progress towards sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty. Agricultural reforms focusing on small-scale agriculture and investments in rural infrastructure were the launching pad of development. On that pathway, the State played an active and crucial role in designing appropriate policies in all relevant areas and creating and constantly adapting development-focused governance structures. As with the second pathway, countries placed strong emphasis on health and education, with the view that social policies were needed from the very beginning of structural transformation. International trade support, such as duty-free and quota-free market access, was vital to countries on the third pathway as a means of integration into the global economy, provided that they had sufficient latent capacity and had adopted complementary domestic policy reforms. Given that few of the least developed countries had benefited from preferential market access and other trade-related support, they clearly required industrial and technological upgrades and enhanced negotiating capacity.

10. During its coordination and management meetings, the Committee had also examined the reasons why almost all United Nations development system organizations recognized the least developed country category and yet some failed to apply it consistently when setting priorities and allocating budgets. The Committee had made recommendations on ensuring consistent support for least developed countries. In preparation for the 2018 triennial review of the least developed country category, it had reviewed the graduation criteria used and outlined a multi-year programme for the comprehensive review of the criteria. As the Committee might wish to recommend additional countries for graduation in 2018, it was important for the United Nations development system and development partners to provide adequate support to graduating countries

during the transition period. A transition strategy should be developed to facilitate such assistance.

11. The Committee understood the significance of the 2030 Agenda and the vital role of the United Nations in its implementation, especially that of the Council in reviewing progress and providing guidance for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee remained committed to supporting Member States in their realization of the Goals.

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (A/71/976-E/2017/79)

General debate

12. **The President** opened the general debate of the 2017 high-level segment on the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

13. **Mr. Mideros** (Ecuador), National Secretary of Planning and Development, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development was particularly significant since it was the first year in which an in-depth review of some of the Sustainable Development Goals would be conducted. Almost two years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the sobering reality was that many Member States were not on pace to achieve the Goals despite their considerable efforts. Developing countries, in particular, faced daunting challenges.

14. Any State which fully respected the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law should be fully committed to multilateralism and, in particular, to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. States should be free to exercise full and permanent sovereignty over their wealth, natural resources and economic activity. They must also respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other States and refrain from applying unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

15. All States and stakeholders should devote themselves to the pursuit of win-win cooperation for global development. To do so, however, the international community must take into account the needs of developing countries, especially African States, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing

States, as well as the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries, conflict and post-conflict countries, and countries and peoples living under foreign occupation. It should be recalled that the 2030 Agenda highlighted the need to empower all vulnerable groups, including children, young people, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, the elderly, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants.

16. If developing countries were to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, they would require an enabling international environment for development and facilitation of the means of implementation, in particular in the areas of finance, international trade, technology and capacity-building. He called on Member States to follow up on their global commitments sincerely and effectively.

17. He commended the 44 Member States that had submitted country-led voluntary national reviews for the 2017 high-level political forum. The Group of 77 and China had shown a positive and constructive attitude throughout negotiations on the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment, with a view to reaching a meaningful outcome. Although the text circulated by the co-facilitators fell below expectations, the Group had accepted it in its current form. He encouraged all Member States to show the same spirit of multilateralism by joining the consensus on the text. The Group would not welcome requests by Member States to reopen the text that might trigger a litany of further demands.

18. **Mr. Majeed** (Maldives), Minister of State for Environment and Energy, speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the high-level political forum should be used to determine progress made and the actions and resources needed to improve the quality, quantity and speed of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The forum remained of particular importance to small island developing States as it was the only space available to them for a holistic review of their development progress. In that regard, he recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/290, had decided to devote adequate time during the forum to the discussion of sustainable development challenges facing small island States.

19. Small island developing States continued to face unique challenges, some due to climate change, others due to the remoteness and small size of the nations, but all of which undermined their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Although the member countries of the Alliance had shown great leadership in confronting

those challenges and remained highly committed to doing their part in the country-led implementation of the 2030 Agenda, international cooperation and global support were critical to their achievement of the Goals.

20. The rapidly declining state of oceans and seas, caused not only by climate change but also by the cumulative impacts of ocean acidification, overfishing and marine pollution, was jeopardizing the achievement of Goal 14. Healthy oceans and seas were fundamental to the economic, environmental and social well-being of small island development States. The Alliance welcomed the commitments to decisive action arising from the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. That political momentum should be maintained to restore, conserve and sustain marine ecosystems.

21. Owing to scant domestic resources and small populations dispersed over many islands, the States members of the Alliance relied on external resource mobilization to overcome many of the challenges they faced. Private investment, however, remained insufficient because of the size and scale of island groups, not to mention the costs of disaster risk and rebuilding. Despite their vulnerability and needs, small island States were often left out of financing mechanisms and therefore required technology transfer and capacity-building in many areas, from infrastructure to data collection.

22. The recent launch of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was encouraging. The Global Action Programme originated from a mandate included within the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) to request FAO to facilitate the creation of an initiative to focus on food security and nutrition. The fact that three members of the Alliance were submitting or had submitted voluntary national reviews in 2016 and 2017 also demonstrated the importance that the Alliance attached to the high-level political forum as a space to share experiences and best practices regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

23. **Mr. Mulusa** (Zambia), Minister of National Development Planning, speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved only if the principle of leaving no one behind was translated into action at the global, regional and

national levels. That meant achieving human development for all.

24. Turning to the specific Goals under review, he said that Goal 1 remained crucial to the development agenda of landlocked developing countries. Although undernourishment, addressed in Goal 2, had decreased dramatically in the previous 15 years, the landlocked developing countries were not yet on a par with other developing countries. With regard to Goal 3, under-five mortality rates had halved since 2000 and progress had been made in stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Nevertheless, the incidence of those diseases in landlocked developing countries was still higher than the average for the developing world. He called on the international community, through its continued support, to help consolidate and broaden the results achieved in health care.

25. Goal 9 on infrastructure and industrialization was of particular importance to countries beset by the high costs of trade, transport and information and communication technology, and by inadequate infrastructure. Transboundary infrastructure in most landlocked developing countries was inadequate for trade purposes. In addition, most of the Group's members were showing signs of deindustrialization that was impacting their capacity for structural transformation and economic diversification, as had been highlighted in the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024.

26. The Group agreed that Goal 17 was of paramount importance, since ODA was one of the main sources of external finance for landlocked developing countries. Development partners should therefore increase the provision of ODA and give greater consideration to the special needs of those countries. Of equal importance were initiatives like Aid for Trade, which provided their countries with technical assistance and improved transit logistics to enable them to participate in international trade. Additional assistance was also needed to make such countries more attractive for foreign direct investment and private sector participation, to fight tax evasion and avoidance and to enhance domestic financing.

27. Globalization had made rich nations richer and poor nations poorer, yet the international community had failed to act. The eradication of poverty would prove impossible unless Member States could ensure that the fruits of economic activities and growth reached all populations.

28. **Mr. Mimica** (European Union), European Commissioner for International Cooperation and

Development, said that almost two years into the 15-year timetable for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, much remained to be done. The European Union considered the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as essential and complementary steps towards a sustainable and resilient future. Ten more States members of the European Union would present their voluntary national reviews in 2017, in addition to the four that had submitted them in 2016.

29. European Union initiatives to implement the 2030 Agenda had either an internal or an external focus. The internal measures were designed to incorporate the Goals into European Union policies. Since the 2016 high-level political forum, the European Union had reaffirmed its commitment to the Paris Agreement; adopted an action plan to protect biodiversity; agreed on an ambitious energy policy to address social, environmental and competitiveness issues; adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights; conducted an in-depth report on equality between women and men in the European Union; and had been working on improving funding for sustainable strategic investment. As part of its long-term vision for realization of the Goals beyond 2020, the European Union had also established a multi-stakeholder platform for exchanging views on areas in which more efforts were needed.

30. With regard to its external measures, sustainable development had been placed at the heart of the 2016 European Union Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy, which provided a vision for joined-up, credible and responsive European Union engagement in the world. In June 2017, the signing of a new European Consensus on Development, a framework for the development policy of European Union institutions and member States, signalled a new era of more coordinated and effective action in development. The European Consensus was fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda, framed as it was around "people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership", and provided for an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental issues. Reaffirming the European Union's commitment to a rules-based global order, with multilateralism and the United Nations at its core, he said that the European Consensus underlined the intention of the European Union to work more closely with partners and countries at all stages of development.

31. To address rising inequalities, the European Union would continue to target assistance towards least-developed and conflict-affected countries and to

strengthen its partnerships with middle-income and more advanced developing countries. Its new European External Investment Plan, in particular, would provide financial, technical and policy support to increase the flow of investment, especially private sector funds, to areas which would not usually receive them. In September 2017, the European Union would launch a major initiative with the United Nations to promote the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

32. The high-level political forum was a vital component in the robust global monitoring and review process of the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda was not optional or reversible, and remained the best option for creating a better world for all.

33. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka), Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Summit-Level Group for South-South Consultation and Cooperation (Group of Fifteen), said that, in recent decades, there had been a steady decline in the number of cases of extreme poverty worldwide, and at one of the fastest rates in human history, due mainly to the economic progress of developing countries. The Group of Fifteen welcomed the inclusion of poverty eradication as an overarching goal of the key global process represented by the 2030 Agenda and would contribute to its implementation as a niche group of the global South. While the primary responsibility for implementing it rested with individual Governments, the Group hoped that, in view of the greater challenge faced by most developing and least developed countries in meeting the agreed commitments, there would be an intensification of global partnerships to enable them to keep up. The high-level political forum would provide an opportunity for laying a solid foundation for the mechanisms needed to monitor progress in implementing the Agenda; such mechanisms should at the same time reaffirm national sovereignty.

34. Meaningful technology transfers and opportunities for capacity-building were required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly through higher rates of economic growth which, together with greater socioeconomic mobility, offered the best means of uplifting the poorest segments of society. Calling therefore for the transfer of renewable energy technology and knowledge that would also address concerns over climate change, the Group strongly supported a technology facilitation mechanism that would promote the development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally-friendly technologies.

35. **Ms. McGuire** (Grenada), Permanent Representative of Grenada to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), commended the President of the Council for convening the second high-level political forum and welcomed the theme chosen for 2017, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". All the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed by the forum were important, especially Goal 17 on revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. Urgent action was needed to ensure that trillions of dollars of private sector resources were channelled into sustainable development objectives.

36. The essential requirements for sustainable development were poverty eradication, the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development. They entailed sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, greater opportunities for all and the reduction of inequalities within and among countries, as well as sustainable finance, which itself called for a collective focus on how financial markets could be aligned with sustainable development, with particular attention to concrete ways of financing it. The ability of CARICOM countries to follow through on the 2030 Agenda was compromised by their high levels of debt in relation to their gross national product; as a region, they remained burdened by their small size and the extreme vulnerabilities of their economies, exacerbated by a lack of product and market diversification, natural disasters and climate change. In addition, the termination of correspondent banking relations could threaten their economic stability and their capacity to remain integrated in global financial, trade and economic systems.

37. The Samoa Pathway was the sustainable development blueprint for CARICOM, whose members appreciated the continued attention of the forum to the sustainable development needs of small island developing States. As many of the CARICOM States sought to develop an integrated approach to the Goals, high-quality, reliable and timely data and analysis were critical. She therefore reiterated the Community's call for dedicated support for strengthening national statistical systems and offices to improve the collection and disaggregation of data.

38. **Ms. Dieschbourg** (Luxembourg), Minister of the Environment, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends for Children and Sustainable Development Goals, said that the Group continued to champion the rights of young people and to empower them as agents of change, both in international forums and in each

country's action to achieve the Goals. Indeed, the Group's mission, as established when it had been formed during the negotiations on the Goals, had been to ensure that children's rights were an integral part of the 2030 Agenda; the members of the Group considered it important to act as long-term advocates for children's rights in that context, from the local to the global level. Their commitment to that cause was reflected in reports to the high-level political forum, which focused on national efforts to raise awareness of the Goals among children in schools, increase child and youth participation and invest in children in order to secure a more prosperous and sustainable future for all.

39. The theme of the current forum was particularly relevant to children, who suffered disproportionately from extreme poverty, with long-term consequences, including the maintenance of poverty for generations to come. Ending child poverty was a critical means of addressing the root causes of poverty and eliminating inter-generational poverty. Investing in children and youth was imperative for building the human capital required to turn demographic transitions into growth dividends. Children must also be made aware of the Goals since the transformation being sought needed first to take hold of people's minds and values; such awareness should guide their action to promote sustainable development in their communities and countries.

40. **Ms. Edillon** (Philippines), Undersecretary for Planning and Policy, National Economic and Development Authority, speaking on behalf of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, said that middle-income countries, which accounted for a large share of the world population and the global economy as well as more than 70 per cent of the world's poor, still faced significant challenges to achieve sustainable development. Their efforts to that end should be strengthened through exchanges of experience, improved coordination and focused support from all stakeholders, aligned with national development plans and strategies. The multiplier effect of such cooperation would benefit other middle-income countries, least developed countries and even developed countries.

41. As countries moved from a low-income to a middle-income level, a significant reduction was seen in international cooperation, thus limiting their ability to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group therefore called for an open dialogue on development in transition and an approach that would foster sequenced, phased and gradual graduation policies. It called on the United Nations development system to address, within existing resources and

mandates, the specific challenges facing middle-income countries, as well as the most vulnerable countries. Methodologies needed to be devised to better cater to the complex and diverse realities of middle-income countries, reflecting the multidimensional nature of development and poverty.

42. **Mr. Alifei** (Chad), Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that poverty eradication was the core of the 2030 Agenda and the major challenge to achieving sustainable development. While global poverty rates had been lowered by 50 per cent since the launching of the Millennium Development Goals, increased efforts were needed in Africa to raise income levels and build the resilience of those still living in extreme poverty. African countries were also concerned about the gender wage gap, which produced huge annual losses in gross domestic product and affected the significant contribution made by women to the economic and social advancement of those countries. The African Union had accordingly declared 2016 "Africa Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women". In addition, investments needed to be made in Africa's youth, its greatest asset. In that spirit, the period 2018-2027 was to be proclaimed "African Decade for Technical, Professional and Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment".

43. Agriculture was the livelihood of nearly 70 per cent of Africans and accounted for one third of the continent's gross domestic product. Efforts to improve agricultural productivity could therefore stimulate demand in other economic sectors, thereby triggering economic growth and lifting millions out of poverty. The sustainable management of marine resources was also essential for poverty eradication, given that most of the poor depended on natural resources for their livelihood. At the same time, much remained to be done to ensure healthy living conditions for the population, in particular through universal health coverage and universal access to reliable, affordable and effective drugs and vaccines.

44. The key to economic growth and poverty eradication in Africa was infrastructure, industrialization and innovation, which required major investments. Indeed, the African Group considered industrialization the main strategy for diversifying and expanding growth and job creation, especially for the increasing proportion of young people entering the labour market each year.

45. **Ms. Gavrilescu** (Romania), Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, said that, because of

the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, actions to attain them were indivisible and produced multiple effects. They must therefore be tackled holistically, with a focus on synergies. The high-level political forum had a central role in the implementation of the Goals, while the United Nations Environment Assembly could be expected to advance their environmental dimension. Her country had contributed \$50,000 to the budget of the 2017 session of the Environment Assembly, to help ensure the participation of delegates from developing countries; it would address the overarching theme of pollution. Romania was also collaborating with other European Union countries in the implementation of the new European Consensus on Development. Her Government attached importance to the regional dimension of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reflected in the recent establishment by the pan-European region of an annual Regional Forum for Sustainable Development. Romania would present its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2018.

46. **Mr. Telle** (Monaco), Minister of State and Head of Government, said that all the countries represented at the high-level forum were united by a determination to transform the world through the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In its pursuit of growth, his own country had long chosen the pathway of responsibility and solidarity, through its involvement in multilateral forums, its development assistance policy and its civil society initiatives. Nevertheless, more could and must be done, both within and outside Monaco. Moreover, the collective engagement in sustainable development was in everyone's interest since there could be no real prosperity or progress unless they were shared by the greatest number and built on sustainable bases. The hard-won freedoms that had gradually been extended to everyone were still not enough unless they went hand in hand with the principles of equity, solidarity and equality before the law, and solidarity itself was not enough if it was not accompanied by a broader sense of responsibility, towards the rest of the world, the environment and future generations. The international community was therefore called on to assume, individually and collectively, that imprescriptible and inalienable duty. Monaco, for its part and within its own limits, would fully rise to the challenge.

47. **Mr. Marlin** (Netherlands), Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, said that the key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals lay in each country's willingness to form national, regional and international

partnerships. For Sint Maarten, one of the four autonomous countries of the Netherlands, sustainability meant continuing to improve the quality of life of all its citizens while observing a number of core principles, including open government, accountability, social inclusion and equality. His Government had introduced measures to combat poverty and hunger, improve health-care policies and services, provide compulsory education and lifelong learning, raise educational levels to meet growing demand for skilled labour and offer affordable housing, particularly for young professionals. In its efforts to advance the well-being of the people of Sint Maarten, his Government remained firmly committed to achieving the Goals, which it was accordingly incorporating into its national development plans and policies.

48. **Mr. Vargas Maldonado** (Dominican Republic), Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that in the space of two years following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the international community had made palpable progress. The Latin America and Caribbean region was particularly engaged in that effort: it had held its first forum for sustainable development earlier in the year and accounted for 11 of the 44 countries that had presented voluntary national reviews to the current high-level forum. More than 15 inter-agency mechanisms for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals had been established in the region, either using existing institutions or putting in place new ones, as in the Dominican Republic, where such a high-level inter-agency had been set up. Since 2012, his country had been following a national development strategy, as part of its national planning system, which had thereby been aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The Dominican National Statistics Office was playing a leadership role in that regard by monitoring the relevant indicators.

49. Huge challenges nevertheless remained, particularly for middle-income countries and small island developing countries like the Dominican Republic; their particular needs should therefore be taken into account. He called for action on commitments made to developing countries to help eradicate structural problems of poverty and inequality and assist in capacity-building. A strengthening of national data systems and review mechanisms was essential for the proper monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

50. **Mr. Guzmán Ortiz** (Mexico), Chief of Staff of the Office of the President, said that the 2030 Agenda provided a basis for designing better public policy at the national and subnational levels; it was a guide and a benchmark for more effective development policies

within each country that required the participation of all levels of government, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. Accordingly, the recently-established National Council for the 2030 Agenda included all stakeholders and laid the foundations for action far into the future. At its inaugural meeting, commitments had been made to include in the federal budget information on programmes and resources relevant to each Sustainable Development Goal and to incorporate the principles of sustainable development into the country's long-term planning. The Mexican Senate had set up a commission to follow up the Agenda, a measure that was being matched by the National Conference of Governors and the 32 federal entities. His country's second voluntary national review, which it wished to present in 2018, would take those efforts as its starting point, including the commitment of its private sector to seek to advance the Goals relating to decent work, innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and responsible consumption and production. His Government believed that the 2030 Agenda should be at the core of every country's daily actions, as it was in Mexico, and proposed that the high-level political forum should take up other international agreements and commitments, put forward specific calls for action and set in motion a sharing of experiences and opportunities for cooperation.

51. **Ms. Molewa** (South Africa), Minister of Environmental Affairs, said that, owing to the different levels of development of countries, success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would be uneven and progress would be hampered by challenges. In her own country, the priority concerns of poverty, unemployment, inequality and sustainability were impacted by the global economic downturn, the changing climate and resource constraints due to the depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation. She therefore called on the United Nations system to provide the information, tools and expertise needed by countries for their development. ODA was also vital for the eradication of poverty in Africa, and illicit financial flows must be combated. The Council's forum on financing for development follow-up had an important role to play in that regard. In addition, food security and nutrition were essential for sustainable development and made it vital that all aspects of the Paris Agreement should be implemented and that nationally determined contributions to the global response to climate change should cover all loss and damage and not merely disaster risk management. It was also important to invest in research, development and infrastructure for science, technology, innovation and engineering and to seek, through

ecosystem approaches and partnerships among all stakeholders, to integrate the three economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

52. **Mr. Navickas** (Lithuania), Minister of the Environment, said that his Government had thoroughly evaluated the extent to which national policies were compliant with the Sustainable Development Goals. The review had revealed that challenges to effective realization of the Goals persisted in spite of the wide range of policy instruments and legislation currently in place. Long-term economic and social development actions set out in the Government's action plan for 2017-2020 included the revision of social allowances and pensions, the provision of financial incentives for young families and families with small children and improved access to medical care.

53. Lithuania was committed to implementing the Paris Agreement and taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. His country's policy on climate change mitigation was based on sustainably developing energy from renewable sources, the source of over half of electricity and heat production in Lithuania, and ensuring energy efficiency. Lithuania strove to ensure gender equality in all areas of life, thereby contributing to economic growth and enhanced standards of living through its implementation of Goal 5.

54. The monitoring of progress towards achieving the Goals was essential. To that end, his Government had begun collecting and analysing sustainable development data and had made over 50 per cent of sustainable development indicators publicly available nationwide. The action plan adopted by Lithuania for 2017 to 2019 encouraged public authorities to focus on development cooperation activities and emphasized its commitment to increase ODA, with a view to contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in partner countries. While each of the 17 Goals was vital, efforts to achieve them must be accompanied by efforts to promote peace, democracy and the rule of law within countries and societies.

55. **Mr. Pramudwinai** (Thailand), Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that over the previous three decades, there had been a marked decline in poverty, malnourishment and maternal and child mortality in his country, which the World Health Organization had recognized as the first country in Asia and the second country worldwide to eliminate the mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis. In spite of those significant achievements, Thailand rejected complacency and was pressing on towards realizing its vision of stability, prosperity and sustainability for all through a

20-year national strategy framework and its twelfth national economic and social development plan, based on his country's sufficiency economy philosophy. The philosophy, which advocated building development from the individual to the community and national levels, stressed resilience, prudence, moderation, knowledge, virtue and risk management.

56. Success in eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity would hinge on ensuring community engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals; promoting partnership in order to lift millions out of poverty; and heeding the voices of all members of society, including the most vulnerable, while also welcoming private sector contributions. His Government's public-private partnership policy scheme had witnessed the establishment of 76 social enterprises. Making use of the capacity of the private sector had helped to expand the market access of community products and improve their designs and packaging.

57. **Mr. Moir Sandoval** (Guatemala), Minister of Planning, said that the lessons learned from the attempt to achieve the Millennium Development Goals had guided his country along a new path to improved State planning of sustainable development efforts. The National Development Plan had been formulated in a collaborative manner, involving all sectors of society and integrating domestic and international development agendas. His Government's steps to align the National Development Plan with the 2030 Agenda, pursue results-based management and ensure accountability attested to its political will and commitment to sustainable human development within a rights-based framework.

58. **Ms. Smerkoltj** (Slovenia), Minister without portfolio responsible for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion, said that with the world at a crossroads, Slovenia was determined to stay the course towards sustainable development as articulated in the 2030 Agenda, both at home and abroad. Her country placed women and children, social stability and the environment at the centre of its efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve comprehensive, sustainable development. Those efforts had made Slovenia one of the highest performing countries globally, according to the latest Sustainable Development Goals Index.

59. Her Government was working to foster collaboration among the business sector, science and the Government to integrate modern digital solutions into everyday life, with a view to making public services more accessible in an environmentally friendly manner. A circular economy, social innovation,

new concepts of green mobility and the sharing economy would contribute to changing consumption and production patterns in order to tackle challenges ranging from high youth unemployment to rapid population growth. Slovenian companies and the Government had jointly launched a project to deliver electricity-powered mobility to mass users. The initiative was expected to contribute to more affordable living through infrastructural and digital advances in the wider region. Through such innovations, Slovenia had the potential to become a standard-bearer for green mobility and help develop new technologies that would confront a host of environmental issues. Faced with the dilemma of how best to adapt to and make use of rapid technological change, humanity had no choice but to find ways to learn faster and govern smarter. To that end, the 2030 Agenda was driving the transformation of the world into a more sustainable, fair, peaceful and prosperous place.

60. **Mr. Brodjonegoro** (Indonesia), Minister of National Development Planning, said that measures to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity must aim to improve the quality of human resources and enhance opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, in an enabling environment characterized by gender equality and partnership. Despite the progress achieved by his country, whose poverty rate was decreasing, the pace had slowed in the previous three years as a result of multidimensional poverty, which required intervention beyond economic growth.

61. His Government was seriously tackling the issue of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, given the contribution that the sustainable use of marine resources and environmental protection could make to poverty eradication in an archipelagic nation. Indonesia was working to achieve inclusive implementation based on mutual trust, the participation of key sectors of society, transparency and accountability. Indonesia also stood ready to contribute to a strengthened global partnership for the means of implementation through its South-South and triangular cooperation programmes. Already equipped with the high-level political forum as the framework for coherent action and follow-up at the national, regional and global levels, deliberations among stakeholders must lead to tangible actions, and the forum must connect meaningfully with other international processes, with a view to supporting countries in their national implementation efforts.

62. **Mr. Jensen** (Denmark), Minister of Finance, said that his country would present its first voluntary national review to the high-level political forum that year; he encouraged countries that had not yet

participated in the process, which was crucial for maintaining momentum in the global follow-up to the 2030 Agenda, to consider doing so. His Government's national action plan covered national and international follow-up on the Sustainable Development Goals, which constituted its platform for action on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Despite new geopolitical challenges, countries must remain committed to the Paris Agreement in order to safeguard the future of the planet. The transition to climate-resilient, low-emission societies was irreversible. Denmark would continue to support its partners in developing countries and remained determined to maintain global leadership on the Paris Agreement.

63. Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, with a particular focus on obstacles at all levels, was vital for global work in the field and crucial for achieving the remaining Goals. Denmark would continue to champion women's and girls' sexual and reproductive rights as fundamental human rights, including by disseminating information about every aspect of those rights in humanitarian and other settings. It would also persist in combating early forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and in promoting women's political and economic empowerment. Such efforts were high on the agenda in his country's candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council for 2019 to 2021.

64. **Mr. Kargbo** (Sierra Leone), Minister of Finance and Economic Development, said that the greatest challenges facing his country were eradicating extreme poverty, a prevailing injustice and a serious threat to coexistence and national security, and minimizing multidimensional deprivations. The reduction of extreme poverty in Sierra Leone, from 31 per cent of the population in 2004 to 14 per cent in 2015, however laudable, still left 900,000 people in that situation. Poverty reduction interventions prioritized over the previous year included youth employment initiatives and conditional and unconditional cash transfer programmes. Moreover, his Government had extended social protection packages to citizens affected by war, with a special focus on war widows, war wounded, amputees and victims of sexual violence, and had provided massive assistance to survivors of the Ebola outbreak.

65. It was unacceptable that Sierra Leone should continue to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on importing food, as the country had enormous potential to meet its own consumption needs locally and to expand export opportunities. To that end, his Government was pursuing a "made in Sierra Leone"

agenda and had enacted a comprehensive public financial management bill to boost its domestic revenue position, in addition to scaling up the State's capacity to deliver services. As part of the effort to finance development domestically, the country's first toll road would begin operating in the near future.

66. In closing, he stressed that the role of partners was vital in curbing illicit financial flows from least developed countries, a heartrending loss for the African continent as a whole.

67. **Mr. Gyan-Baffour** (Ghana), Minister for Planning, said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda had coincided with the second year of his country's medium-term plan for 2014 to 2017, and the first steps towards developing a long-term national development plan beyond the period covered by the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, as a member of the African Union, Ghana had also incorporated the first 10 years of Agenda 2063, which had been adopted by the African Union, into its national development agenda. In order to ensure full implementation of both major international development agendas, Ghana had outlined a three-pronged strategy of aligning the national and subnational authorities' development priorities with both agendas, adapting the targets of each agenda and incorporating them into the long-term national development plan, and also adopting some targets without any modification.

68. The medium-term policy framework for 2018 to 2021 was fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and with Agenda 2063 adopted by the African Union. Moving forward, it would be necessary to ensure that the plans were fully funded by budgetary allocations in order for annual budgets to be anchored to the Goals. For its part, his Government intended to put in place adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, having assessed its readiness to monitor the Goals and having prepared a draft assessment report. As a member of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, Ghana had taken a number of measures to strengthen its data ecosystem. In an effort to broaden engagement, civil society organizations had been integrated into the governance structure for the achievement of the Goals.

69. **Mr. Darii** (Republic of Moldova), Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, said that his Government had partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other stakeholders to adapt the Sustainable Development Goals to the local level. Under the auspices of the recently established National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development, Moldova had begun the

implementation process, mapping the 169 global targets against national policies and strategies, with 107 of those targets having been considered particularly relevant for the country. Data ecosystem mapping to assess the availability of data and institutional monitoring capacity had helped to define country-specific indicators.

70. A new partnership framework for sustainable development concluded with UNDP for 2018 to 2022 would support reforms aimed at modernizing the Moldovan economy and society. The Moldova 2020 National Development Strategy was being evaluated in order to align it with the 2030 Agenda and other international commitments, enabling it to serve as an effective reform agenda that would maximize benefits for all, including the most vulnerable. Awareness-raising campaigns on sustainability had been organized throughout the country. His Government attached priority to gender equality and to the critical roles of infrastructure, industry and innovation in achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth and poverty eradication. Pervasive disparities required immediate action in order to provide all human beings with equal opportunities to fulfil their aspirations.

71. **Mr. De Croo** (Belgium), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, the Digital Agenda, Post and Telecommunications, said that his Government had launched the Belgian Sustainable Development Goals Charter to unite the private sector, civil society and the public sector around the Goals and international development; to date, more than 100 companies and organizations had endorsed that Charter. Building bridges between generations and encouraging youth involvement in the 2030 Agenda were equally vital. The challenges that persisted, particularly the unacceptably high number of people living in extreme poverty and countries still being left behind, underscored the reality that the Goals should be met for everyone, especially the most vulnerable. To that end, his country had undertaken to allocate at least half of its ODA to the least developed countries and fragile States and encouraged other donors to follow suit. ODA should be better used to leverage innovative sources of financing, including private investments, and more attention should be devoted to the quality of assistance, not just its quantity.

72. As a leader in promoting gender equality, Belgium was supporting the global effort to empower women and girls through the She Decides initiative it had helped launch, and had raised 181 million euros for that purpose at a conference earlier that year. Ranked twelfth worldwide on that year's Sustainable Development Goals Index, his country had made

inroads towards achieving sustainable development but could do more in such areas as environmental protection, promoting lifelong learning and combating obesity, as revealed in its first voluntary national review.

73. Belgium had taken note of the need to build more efficient tax collection systems and lift the tax exemption regimes still being granted to donors by their partner countries. Belgian statisticians were working to translate global and European Sustainable Development Goal indicators into national and subnational ones and were assisting other Governments through the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. His country had pioneered the concept of Digital for Development, currently a key component of the European Union's international development strategy. However, the United Nations system was in need of reform in order to make it fit for purpose in supporting the 2030 Agenda.

74. **Mr. Nyongolo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, said that his country's vast territory of forests, hydrological and other resources was largely underutilized. His Government had integrated the Sustainable Development Goals into its strategic national development plan, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development. The challenge of financing for development was particularly acute for least developed countries such as his. A strengthened, effective technical and financial partnership, as outlined in Goal 17, was therefore of the essence.

75. Having signed the Paris Agreement in 2016, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had made considerable progress towards reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation under the REDD-plus initiative and was also actively involved in a partnership for resilient cities and renewable energy initiatives. His country's achievement of the Goals would be contingent upon finalizing its national development plan, ensuring that the commitments of financing entities were upheld, enhancing national statistical systems that could provide up-to-date and reliable data, and strengthening the capacities of various stakeholders in order to take ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.